

out to my family and to my family's family. And I see what good will come from his efforts and his desire and his hope and vision for the future.

Also, I want to say that I think he has worked very well with the majority leader. The majority leader has had some tremendous stress and strain. But had it not been for the cooperation and effort of the Democratic leader, the first session of the 105th Congress would not be ending on the high note that I believe it is.

I thank the Chair.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

THANKS TO SENATOR WENDELL FORD

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me thank the Senator from Kentucky for his very generous comments. I am not worthy of his remarks. I appreciate very much the kindness that he has shown me in all the years that we have worked together but in particular the last three. I couldn't be a luckier leader than I am to have the ability to work as closely as I can and do with the distinguished minority whip. It has been a real joy for me.

This has not been an easy year for him. As the ranking member of the Rules Committee, he had to deal with a very, very contentious issue with the seating of Senator LANDRIEU.

He has had an array of challenges presented to him, and each and every time I had the confidence and the good fortune to know that he was going to successfully work through those challenges and difficulties with the kind of ability and tenacity and extraordinary work that he does so routinely.

So I thank him for his work. I thank him for his friendship and the tremendous effort that he has put forward in making our caucus what it is today. I truly believe that any leader is only as good as the team he has to work with. I have the good fortune to have, in my view, one of the best teams the Democratic caucus has ever had in leadership. And he is the preeminent example of what I am referring to. He is respected so widely and so enthusiastically that it goes without saying that when it comes to respect and when it comes to the extraordinary admiration that his colleagues have for him, Wendell Ford is in a class by himself.

THANKING THE STAFF

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me also commend, as Senator FORD did, our floor staffs on both sides. The Senator has expressed his gratitude to my staff in the leader's office. I do so as well. They have just been remarkable all year long. But whether it is in the leader's office or here on the floor, it has made my job one that has been so much easier as a result of their efforts and their knowledge of the way our

process works. They bring to work each day an extensive experience but, more than experience, an attitude that I think epitomizes the kind of quality of people that we have.

So I thank our staff. I thank our leadership team. I thank the caucus. I am very grateful once more to celebrate what I consider to be good teamwork all the way around.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am completing my first year in the Senate. I will be the first to confess I have a lot to learn, but it has certainly been a rewarding experience serving in this great body. Having had the opportunity to serve 14 years in the House, I was no stranger to Capitol Hill, but this is a much different institution. The dynamic of 100 men and women working together as opposed to 435 is substantially different. I have been impressed with the volume of work that each Senator is asked to shoulder. I have also been very impressed with the leadership, and I join my colleague from Kentucky, Senator FORD, in noting the fine work of Senator DASCHLE as the Democratic minority leader. It is a tough job. He is lucky to have a good staff to have the energy and talent he brings to it. We are fortunate on the Democratic side to have him.

NOMINATION OF BILL LANN LEE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at this moment I would like to make reference to what happened in the Senate Judiciary Committee today relative to the nomination of Bill Lann Lee.

Bill Lann Lee is a Chinese-American who was designated by President Clinton to head the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice. It is probably one of the more controversial jobs in the Federal Government.

Civil rights, of course, throughout our history has evoked great emotion. Bill Lann Lee is a person, the son of Chinese immigrants, who came up the hard way, faced challenges which many of us have never faced, overcame them, and then devoted 23 years of his life serving with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. It is interesting; he filed some 200 different civil rights lawsuits in his public career, settled all but six of them—settled all but six of them.

As the mayor of Los Angeles, a Republican, Richard Riordan, said, Bill Lann Lee is the mainstream of civil rights law. He is a person who looks for

practical and pragmatic solutions to civil rights challenges.

Mr. President, in my estimation, he is exactly the right person for this job, and I am glad the President nominated him. What happened to Bill Lann Lee today in the Judiciary Committee was a very sad situation for Bill Lann Lee. Unfortunately, he did not have the votes and had his name been called, he would not have been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the floor of the Senate for confirmation. So as a result, there was a parliamentary tangle, and when all was said and done very little was done after 2 or 3 hours of speeches.

It strikes me as sad that we have now reached a point in this debate over race and civil rights in this country where we are headed in the wrong direction. It is sad that the leaders of both political parties do not look for opportunities to bind the wounds of this country, wounds of several centuries over the issue of race, but instead continue to look for flash points, buzz words, bringing up issues like quotas and preferences and such.

Bill Lann Lee was asked directly, what is his position on quotas. He said, unequivocally, decisively, "I am against them." Bill Lann Lee said, "I am against quotas." But if you would listen to his critics in the Judiciary Committee today, you would think his answer was exactly the opposite. They won't accept yes for an answer. Bill Lann Lee said, "Yes, I am opposed to quotas," and yet they continue to badger him and say, oh, that isn't what he really means.

It is ironic, too, when they quizzed him about the important Supreme Court decisions in the area of civil rights, he gave what I thought were very cogent, thoughtful answers and complete to the best of his ability. In fact, his answers, as the New York Times reported this morning, were virtually identical to the answers of Seth Waxman, a man who sought the position of Solicitor General, who was well qualified for the job, and was approved by the Judiciary Committee and by the Senate without much of any kind of resistance. But along comes Bill Lann Lee, and for some reason, giving the same answers to the same questions, he is being rejected.

I said today in the Judiciary Committee that I wasn't certain that if Thurgood Marshall's name had been submitted today to head the Civil Rights Division, he could have made it through that committee. In fact, I will go beyond that; he could not have made it through that committee because, you see, Thurgood Marshall, who distinguished himself in the field of civil rights throughout his lifetime and went on to serve this country with distinction on the Supreme Court, was an activist, a man who actively pursued the cause of equal rights in America. And I have to tell you that the political sentiment in the Senate Judiciary Committee is not open to that sort of individual.